Course Description

This course is intended to serve as an introduction to the major empirical and theoretical themes in the study of contentious politics in Latin America. While it is impossible to cover every theoretical approach or Latin American case during the semester, the course should give students the tools to begin to think critically about where and why people engage in collective action. We will develop and hone these tools through thinking about Latin American cases, paying specific attention to revolutions, social movements, and riots. The course is designed in three parts. It begins by exposing students to the dominant theoretical paradigms in the study of contentious politics as well as some prominent critiques. The course then turns to empirical themes in Latin American revolutions, challenging students to use and question the theoretical tools to which they have already been exposed. The final part of the course looks to social movements in Latin America. Cases will focus on challenges to dictatorships, identity-based movements, and resistance to globalization.

Course Expectations:

1) Attend and participate in all course meetings.
2) Thoughtfully engage course readings.
3) Complete all assignments on time.

Grading: There will be 100 points available over the course of the semester. They will be allotted as follows:

1) Class participation. 15 points total. Attendance at every session is expected and will be factored into this grade, though you will need to participate regularly and thoughtfully to get full credit.

2) Class discussion questions. 10 points total. You will choose five weeks for which to write discussion questions. Questions are due by 10pm on Monday. Please write 2-4 questions suitable for class discussion and post them on the Learn@UW site in the appropriate dropbox. Your questions should cover the
readings assigned for both Tuesday and Thursday (if there are readings for both days) and should reference at least TWO readings (unless there is only one for the whole week). Questions are intended for discussion purposes. They should not have a “correct” or obvious answer. For example, do not write: “who was the dictator that Castro’s forces deposed in Cuba?” Instead, an appropriate question might be “How does Goodwin think that Bastista’s actions influenced the outcome of the Cuban Revolution?” Discussion questions cannot be turned in late to receive credit.

***You must write at least one set of questions from Part I, one set of questions from Part II, and one set of questions from Part III.***

3) Unit Tests. There will be three unit tests. One test per unit of the course. The first test is worth 15 points. The second and third tests are worth 30 points. If you have taken PS/IS 667 we will replace the first unit test with a short writing assignment.

4) Extra credit. There may be opportunities for extra credit throughout the semester. These will be talks or other events on campus related to the course. If you see an announcement for a potentially related event please let Professor Simmons know and she will decide if it is, indeed, a good opportunity for extra credit and then announce it to the entire class. Each extra credit opportunity will be worth 2 points (unless announced otherwise). To get the credit you will need to attend the event and write a 3-4 sentence summary of the event as well as what you learned. These assignments can be submitted online in a dropbox folder.

5) Computers. Electronic devices cannot be used during class (e.g. laptops, iPads, smart phones, etc). Please see me if you think you might be exempt from this requirement for medical or learning-related reasons.

**THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM**

To contest any grade you must submit a request in writing to the instructor. The request must contain a detailed description of why the grade given should be changed.

Students affiliated with the McBurney Center should see me about exam arrangements and any other accommodations.

**Book to purchase:**


All other readings will be made available to you at Learn@UW. Please notify Professor Simmons or Rachel Schwartz immediately if you find that a reading is missing.
PART I: Theoretical Tools and Regional Overview

Week 1

September 2: Introduction to the course and to each other

- Discussion of course expectations and requirements
- Discussion of the syllabus

September 4: Introduction to Theoretical Themes

- Snow and Soule (Chapter 1 and 2 p. 1-63)

Week 2: Theoretical Themes

September 9: An Overview of Approaches to Mobilization

Political Opportunities

- Snow and Soule (Chapter 3, p. 64-109)

September 11: An Overview of Approaches to Mobilization

Resources

- Snow and Soule (Chapter 4, 109-132)

Week 3: Theoretical Themes (II)

September 16: An Overview of Approaches to Mobilization

Frames


- Noonan, Rita K. 1995. “Women against the state: political opportunities and collective action frames in Chile’s transition to democracy.” Sociological Forum, 19, p. 81-111

September 18: Critiques of the dominant paradigms


**Week 4: Unit Test I**

September 23: In-Class Review

September 25: Unit Test

**PART II: Revolutions**

**Week 5: Comparative Approaches to Revolution**

September 30:

- In-class film

October 2: Theories of Revolution


**Week 6: A State-Centered Approach to Central America**

October 7:


October 9:

Week 7: A Closer Look at Success—The Revolutionary Movement in Cuba

October 14:


October 16:


Week 8: Emotions and Revolutions—El Salvador

October 21:


October 23:


Week 9: A Closer Look at Failure—the Sendero Luminoso

October 28:

- Assignment from Steve Stern’s Edited Volume TBD.

October 30:

- In class film
Week 10: Unit Test II

November 4: Unit Test Review

November 6: UNIT TEST

PART III: Social Movements

Week 11: Human Rights and mothers’ organizations

November 11:


November 13:
- In-Class Film: Las Madres. HV6322.3 A7 M34 1985 College Library Main Collection.

Week 12: Organizing Around Identity: Indigenous Mobilizations

November 18: Introduction and Ecuador

November 20: Bolivia
**Week 13: Resistance to Globalization (Chiapas)**

**November 25:**


**November 27:**

- Thanksgiving

**Week 14: Resistance to Marketization**

**December 2: Argentina**


**December 4: Bolivia**


**Week 15: Unit Test III**

**December 9: Review**

**December 11: Unit Test III**